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By

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Asheville, N. C.

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Medicine in Buncombe County Down to 1885; Historical and Biographical Sketches.*

By Gaillard S. Tennent, M. D., Asheville, N. C.

The act establishing the county of Buncombe was ratified on the 14th of January, 1792, the new county embracing all that part of North Carolina lying west of the Blue Ridge, or watershed. From this large area other counties were cut off from time to time, the formation of Madison in 1850 reducing it to its present limits, to which we shall confine ourselves in the following sketches.

Ten years before the formal establishment of county government the first settlers had crossed the Ridge and effected permanent settlements on the Swannanoa, and for at least twenty-five years after the same event we may regard the county as but the seat of a primitive backwoods settlement.

The only reliable and connected records of this period available are the court records beginning in 1798 and the entries in Bishop Asbury's journal made on the occasions of his yearly visitations in the mountains, quoted by Mr. F. A. Sondley in his article published at the time of the celebration of Buncombe's centennial, and from them we are unable to glean more than a trace of anything connected with the general health conditions or of anyone engaged in the practice of medicine.

These settlements were about thirty-five years behind the Piedmont districts of

*Read before the Buncombe county Medical Society Nov. 20th, 1905.

South Carolina, of which an excellent description is found in the appendix to Ramsey's History of that State from the pen of Dr. Davis, presumably a citizen of the Piedmont, and written about the year 1808. He says: "While the upper country has been growing richer it has declined in health. When the interior of this country was first settled by white men, and for many years after, disease was rarely known. This state of things, however, has been gradually changing from that period to the present. Ever since the last years of the eighteenth century diseases have multiplied in a ratio much exceeding the increase of population. Many types and grades incident to populous and older countries have been introduced with their usual force and malignancy." The increase he attributes to physical changes in the face of the country, the gradual revolution in manners and modes of living and the increasing difficulties attendant upon making a living. He omits the factor which in the light of modern science would stand at the head of the list, viz.; increased facilities for travel, intercourse and exchange of commodities, germs, etc.

We may with reason assume that the above conditions existed in the settlement in the formative period in which it was a more or less isolated colony. After this began what may be termed a transitionary period of fifteen or twenty years, dating from the opening of a passable road into Tennesse, which soon became such a highway of travel that a Turnpike Company

was organized in 1826 to improve and operate it. The consequent intercourse with more populous communities, both east and west, must have quickly imported the diseases of civilization along with its other attendants, while the stream of emigrants passing through must have left seeds of infection in its wake.

We can only speculate on the probable date of the appearance of one or two important diseases. Dr. Davis goes on to say, speaking of fevers: "Agues and fevers are more rare than formerly. They seem to have been merged in the more virulent forms of bilious fever." This is clearly typhoid fever, it not being generally recognized as a specific disease at this time, and, though it is possible that no accidental case came into the settlement earlier, it must have gained a more or less permanent foothold soon after the tide of travel turned across the mountains.

"Milk Sick," that mysterious mountain disease, which was quite common from the time of the earliest settlements, occurred in the Hominy valley as late as the middle of the nineteenth century, and even in the eighties there were points of infection fenced off in pastures in the Pisgah Mountains. The symptoms, those of severe gastro-enteritis with some variations, were said to follow the ingestion of milk or butter from an infected cowa The origin was variously ascribed to some unknown plant or fungus growth, or to some mineral poison occurring in certain spots.

Scarlet fever and diphtheria were not

unknown in the low country during the eighteenth century, therefore it may be presumed that they occurred to some extent before the first authenticated epidemics reported by Dr. J. A. Reagan in the early sixties. Dr. Reagan also reports a serious epidemic of pneumonia in 1864.

It is a well known fact that tuberculosis was a rare disease among the inhabitants up to the end of the time covered by these sketches.

In the earliest times the practice of obstetrics and the care of such cases of illness as affected the hardy race of hunters, whose agricultural operations were secondary, and shared in largely by the women, were generally in the hands of the "Granny" of the neighborhood. She was usually a woman of mature years or even aged, well versed in the arts of primitive medical botany, the collecting and curing of roots and herbs, as well as the preparation of "teas." This relic of frontier life has clung to the population with all the tenacity of superstition, often fostered by necessity, and it is only in recent years that it is receeding into the coves and corners of the county. In the more intelligent households this practice was improved by the study of some work on family medicine. Accidents, injuries, etc., were attended to by some man qualified by long experience.

This state of affairs will not cause wonder when we realize that, according to Ramsey, there were only twelve natives in the whole State of South Carolina who had obtained degrees in medicine up to 1778

and these from foreign schools, the remainder of the practice being in the hands of Europeans, and that even in 1808 most of the plantation practice was domestic in the rich and populous country around Charleston where disease was rampant.

During this long period the only man known to have engaged in the art of healing was Geo. Swain, father of the Governor of that name. In his book of sketches, Gov. (of S. C.) Ben Perry mentions that while attending school at the Newton Academy in Asheville he boarded in the home of Geo. Swain, who to the office of post master and his trade of hat making added the calling of doctor. Swain came here from Oglethorpe county, Georgia, in 1796 and bought a lot on the west side of Main street where it is presumed he lived at first.

In the transitionary period above mentioned we cease to grope in the mists of comparison and surmise wherein our paper was near losing its claim to the historical, and come upon one fact. Back of this period, in 1793, there was born in the Reems Creek valley, Robert B. Vance, son of David Vance, and the youngest of several children. He was the first native of Buncombe county to adopt the practice of medicine, and, until many years had passed, the last one, according to the limited data at our command.

We are indebted to Mr. F. A. Sondley for information concerning Dr. Vance's life obtained from papers in his possession. This young man, born of a family whose

name is now historic, began his short career of activity with a serious handicap, his left leg being shorter than its fellow as a result of white swelling. Despite this infirmity, however, he gained a great notoriety in his nine years of public life.

He studied medicine at the medical school of Dr. Charles Harris in Cabarrus county, and in 1818 opened his office in Asheville where he practiced till 1821. Disliking the work, he gave it up for politics, being able to do this on account of a $5 000 prize won in a lottery and property left him by his father. He succeeded Felix Walker, (the man who spoke for Buncombe) as representative for the Buncombe District in the lower house of the 18th Congress (1823-1825), but was defeated in 1825 when he ran for the same office by S. P. Carson. In 1827 Carson again defeated him after a canvass in which Vance forced Carson to challenge him.

The duel was fought at Saluda Gap on the South Carolina line in the fall of 1827 when Vance was mortally wounded, only living a few days. There were present at this duel among others, Vance's physician, Dr. Geo. D. Phillips, and the celebrated David Crockett, one of Carson's party.

After Dr. Vance's retirement from practice in 1821 the next man of whom we have any knowledge was Dr. George D. Phillips, who in the early twenties came to Asheville, like many of his successors, on account of ill health.

Like Dr. Vance he was fond of public affairs, but, unlike him, his span of public

service extended over a half century.

He was born in Amherst county, Virginia, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, educated at William and Mary, and graduated in medicine at Jefferson, in Philadelphia. Before coming to North Carolina he practiced in Newberry and Union, South Carolina, where he served one term in the State Legisture. He engaged in active practice in Asheville, and here he was married in 1823 to Elizabeth, daughter of James W. Patton. In 1830 he bought property on Cane Creek, the place now known as Struan, The Lyman home, where he lived and practiced for six or seven years, moving from there to Habersham county, Georgia. While a resident of Buncombe he was one of the promoters of the French Broad Turnpike, above referred to.

After moving to Georgia he was still more actively engaged in public affairs, being sent to the legislature for ten years, where he was materially interested in the organization of the State Medical Board, and the building of the Georgia Railroad and the State Sanitarium. For many years he was a member of this board, acting as examiner for North East Georgia. At the time of Sherman's raid he was superintendent of the Railroad, and was credited with saving most of the rolling stock.

These varied activities exhibit a strenuosity of life and the possession of a power of initiative seldom found in the profession. To the culture and polish of Old Virginia he added much of the rough-hewn strength

of the early settler, a combination long since lost. He died at the age of eighty.

A contemporary and probably a pupil of Dr. Phillips next claims our attention. J. F. E. Hardy was born in Newberry District, South Carolina, in 1802, and, though coming from one of the first families of upper Carolina, he began life in a very obscure position from which he arose to prominence by virtue of his own efforts and merit. At an early age he was left an orphan in the care of an uncle who apprenticed him to a tailor. As a youth he had higher aspirations, but it is not known whether his renunciation of the work was earlier than or whether it was on account of the same breakdown in health that brought him to the mountains.

At any rate, he came to Asheville about 1821 "with only one lung," which organ, we may state for the benefit of the specialists, served him in a satisfactory manner for the following sixty-one years. In 1824 he married Jane Patton, sister of Dr. Phillips' wife, and shortly thereafter went to Charleston to attend lectures, graduating at one of the two medical colleges then in existence in that city.

For fifteen or twenty years Dr. Hardy lived in the house on the corner of South Main and Eagle Streets, at that time one of the imposing residences of the town, but for many years degenerating, till, under the name "Greasy Corner," its reputation sank so low as to necessitate its removal this year (1905). It is surprising to note how many of these old landmarks were either

built or occupied by physicians, at one time or other. Dr. Hardy's first wife did not live long, and in 1840 he married Miss Erwin. of Morganton, soon after which he moved to Swannanoa Hill which now overlooks Biltmore Bridge.

Here he lived till 1860 when he sold this fine estate and bought Belleview, on South Main Street, built by his son-in-law, Gilbert Tennent, in the early fifties as a summer home, and now owned by Mrs. Buchannon. Soon after the Civil War he withdrew from practice, and built the brick house on the west side of the Hendersonville road beyond Biltmore, which like his first home has recently been torn down. Here he ended his days at the ripe age of eighty.

Unlike his predecessors he had little to do with public service, though his life was an active one, his sphere of activity being limited to his practice and the cares of his estate which at length became large for Buncombe of that day.

For many years he was the acknowledged leader of the profession in Western North Carolina, and to this day his professional and social position has never been equalled.

In general practice he was the most universally beloved and popular man the profession has known in this county, his clientelle embracing, besides his own county, the Flat Rock settlement, and at times even invading lower South Carolina.

In surgery he was a fearless and skillful operator, these qualities being severely taxed during the early years when he was often solated from professional aid.

Socially he was possessed of engaging and polished manners, and the broad hospitality dispensed at Swannanoa Hill and his other homes was long remembered by visitors to the mountains.

Of the children of each marriage the first son was killed at the age of twenty, James in one of the battles of the Mexican War, and William in the first battle of Manassas in the Civil War.

One son, J. Geddings, named after Dr. Eli Geddings, a life long friend, took up his father's calling.

Another contemporary of Phillips and Hardy, Dr. John Dickson, was born in Charleston in 1795, graduated from Yale in 1814, and studied medicine and divinity, being pastor of the Asheville Presbyterian Church in 1843-45. He came here for his health some time before 1836, in which year he bought property now located by the junction of the Biltmore and St. Dunstans roads where he built the house long known as the Middleton place, recently removed to make room for St. Dunstans Road. Here he opened a school which he continued after moving several years later into the house at the corner of Church Street, where the Dhrumor building now stands.

Elizabeth Blackwell, a native of England, came here from Cincinnati as an assistant in this school, read medicine under him, and later through the influence of his brother, Dr. S. H. Dickson, obtained the first Medical diploma granted a woman in this country.

Dr. Dickson died in 1847, and this year

(1905) was placed a tablet to his memory in the wall of the First Presbyterian Church.

From the thirties two more names come down to us, Dr. Milton, who practiced in the Hominy Valley, moving from there to Georgia about 1832, and Dr. Osborne from Haywood county, who practiced in Asheville for a short time.

About this time two distinguished names were connected with Asheville; Dr. S. H. Dickson and Dr. Eli Geddings, both of Charleston, spent many summers here. Dr. S. H. Dickson, whose name stands in the front rank of practitioners of his day, was a brother of John Dickson. He built Swannanoa Hill and later, Forest Hill, at which place he entertained large parties of guests in the lavish style of the ante-bellum days.

Dr. Eli Geddings was in the first class graduating from the Medical College of South Carolina and filled at different times several chairs in this and the succeeding institution. In "Green's Pelvic Organs" we read that he was the first operator to pare the edges in the operation for cervical lacerations.

Dr. Thomas C. Lester, another South Carolinian, came here a young man about 1841, and opened an office in South Main Street opposite the head of Eagle Street. Some time after coming here he was married to Miss Happoldt, of Morganton, and before his death, which occurred in 1854, he had succeeded in building up an extensive practice.

Dr. Barnard Weaver, son of James

Weaver of Reems Creek, was practicing in northern Buncombe in the forties. About 1858 he went to Missouri where a few years later he met a tragic death. He hald sold some stock and was murdered for the money.

The next accession to the ranks, Dr. Morgan Lines Neilson, deserves a greater tribute than these few weak lines. He was a plain and unassuming man of the highest ideals, always exhibiting that large sympathy so endearing in the family physician, of which he was a perfect type. His services did not always end with advice and prescription, but often embraced some of the arduous duties of the nurse in a critical period, a custom common among physicians of his time. Dr. Neilson did not give up this practice as it fell into disuse in later years, and a half century of this sort of work coupled with his large marriage connection so closely identified him with this country that it was generally lost sight of that he was not a native Buncombite.

He was born in East Tennessee in 1822, educated at Tusculum College, and came to Asheville in 1839. He attended lectures at the old Transylvania University, and in 1844 married Laura Vance, sister to the Senator, and started practice. His home, with the exception of two years spent in the California gold fields, was the old Fulton place, 254 North Main Street, until the beginning of the war.

At the outbreak of the Civil War he entered the 14th N. C. Infantry as surgeon, serving in the same regiment to the end. Following this he spent six years in South

Carolina. Returning to Asheville, he lived at 71 Woodfin Street till his death in 1894.

He was associated in practice with Dr. W. L. Hilliard in the early days and later with Dr. Cain.

Dr. David J. Gibson, another associate of Dr. Neilson, came here in the forties from Tennessee. He married Miss Harriet Johnston, daughter of William Johnston, and after a few years moved to Jonesboro, Tennessee.

Dr. Charles N. Candler came to Asheville some time before 1850 from the present Madison county. His office was on the north west corner of the Square, where he practiced several years before being infected with the western fever, and succumbing to this disease seemingly common among the young physicians of his time. He returned to Leicester after the war, where he practiced upwards of fifteen years.

During the decade beginning with 1850 the ranks of the profession were recruited by an influx of young men of ability, who, for the most part, came to stay. Four of them are with us yet, three being still engaged in practice.

Dr. William Lewis Hilliard was born in 1823 in Hall county, Georgia, of North Carolina parentage, grew to manhood in Spartanburg, where he began the study of medicine. About 1845 we find him in Asheville, studying with Dr. Lester. After attending lectures in New York, he entered the Philadelphia Medical College and graduated in 1850, in which year he entered into partnership with Dr. Lester.

Some time previous to this a political disagreement with an editor named John Hyman led to a duel, which was fought at Saluda Gap. Unlike the former occasion this was the cause of no serious damage. These two instances are the only practical references to the code chronicled, in which medical men of our county were principals.

In 1854 Dr. Hilliard was married to Margaret Love, daughter of James R. Love, of Haywood, and moved into the house so long a landmark on the Hilliard lot, replaced in 1886 by the present building. His office was at first a small, two roomed structure at the corner of Willow and South Main Streets.

During more than forty years Dr. Hilliard devoted himself with untiring self-sacrifice to the relief of the sick and suffering without respect of rank or circumstance. He was a perfect type of that masterpiece evolved by nineteenth century conditions and culture, the family physician, and he exemplified the strength of the bonds between that type and its votaries in holding the same clientelle through ante-bellum prosperity, reconstructional depression and the instability of the growing city.

Dr. Hilliard's war record was a distinguished one. His first commission was from the Governor as Surgeon in the 1st N. C. Cavalry, in May, 1861. Six months later this was confirmed by President Davis, the regiment being then known as the 9th N C. After a few months he was transferred to hospital duty at Knoxville, and in September, 1862, was appointed by the

Surgeon General, Chief Surgeon of Division.

In August, 1863, he was appointed president of an examining board to meet at Knoxville to examine applicants for medical offices.

When Bragg's army fell back from Tennessee the order came for him to open up hospitals at Dalton, Ga., in anticipation of a great battle. This was Chickamauga. Here he became critically ill, and a long convalescence caused his return to Asheville, where he was in charge of the hospitals at this post till the end of the war.

In 1890 death suddenly ended his career. Three sons, however, have lengthened the medical services of this family.

J. S. T. Baird, a grandson of Bedent Baird, one of the Pioneers, was born on Beaverdam in 1831, attended lectures in Charleston and graduated at Jefferson in 1851. After a few years' practice here, he went to Tennessee. Moving back to Buncombe in a short time, he settled on Beaverdam where he now lives, having given up practice since 1887. His son, the late Harry L. Baird, was once president of our society.

During the war Dr. Baird served on the conscription examining board with Dr. D. T. Millard who came under orders from eastern Carolina for the purpose.

Dr. Millard, it may be here stated, though long a resident of Asheville never engaged in active practice here.

In the early years of this decade Drs. Geddings Hardy, Stevens and Fletcher were fellow students under Dr. Hilliard

and the elder Hardy.

J. Geddings Hardy was born in Asheville in 1829. Here he spent his childhood and youth, and following in the footsteps of his father went to Charleston, where he graduated in medicine in 1851. After practicing in Asheville a short time, he moved to the Georgia Seaboard where he married and lived until commissioned Assistant Surgeon in the Bethel N. C. regiment, in which he served till the close of the war.

Returning to Asheville, he again took up practice, and continued in active service till shortly before his death in 1885. His home was in Church Street, just below the rectory of Trinity Church.

He fell heir to a large share of his father's practice, and being a man of ability with the same faculty for making friends, he was only prevented from rivalling his father's success and brilliancy by the depression, mental as well as material, of this sad period.

Beginning with his return home he began a series of metereological observations, supposed to be the ones on which were based the table referred to below.

James Mitchell Stevens was born on Swannanoa in 1827. His childhood and youth were spent at the old Stevens homestead on the Hendersonville road, another old landmark recently gone. He studied medicine in Asheville and attended lectures in Charleston, taking up the practice in 1853 in Asheville, where he remained until 1859, when he removed to Leicester. While in Asheville he was married to Miss Cath-

erine Cecilia Corpening.

Upon the sounding of the call to arms he was commissioned Captain, in which capacity he served a short time until transferred to the surgical service in the 60th N. C.

In 1865 he was engaged in practice with Dr. Boyd in Asheville, soon, however, returning to Leicester, his present home, after a short sojourn in the west.

One familiar with the physical difficulties and the conditions of life met with in practicing in the outlying portions of our county, the real mountains, needs hear no higher tribute than this to the moral, mental and physical strength back of this career: Dr. Stevens still continues to ride to every call as erect and as resourceful as at any time these fifty-odd years.

After Dr. Stevens the next native of the county to take up medicine bid fair to rival any of this group of young men in the extent of his wide and useful practice when he was cut off in his prime. John Daniel Reynolds was born at the old Reynolds home on the Sulphur Springs road in 1832. He graduated in medicine at Nashville in 1854, in which year he was married to Theresa E. Sheppard, of Yancey, and settled in Asheville on the Reynolds lot, corner of North Main and Woodfin Street, where his small office building still stands.

He served throughout the war in the 29th N. C. in a surgical capacity. After only a few years more of practice he died in 1874, too soon to see more than the dawn of his county's prosperity. His only surviving

son is Dr. Carl V. Reynolds.

Here we must digress a mile or so across the Henderson border to pay our meed to the memory of another long life of country practice covering a large area in southern Buncombe.

George W. Fletcher, grandson of another pioneer, was born at the old Fletcher place across Cane Creek in 1829. His active life of practice began in 1855 in which year he graduated in Charleston. He built the present Fletcher home, and married Elizabeth Clayton, who survives him. Here he practiced until a short time before his death in 1901, endearing himself to a large circle of friends, comprising, besides the native population, a number of low country planters who had summer homes in the neighborhood.

He was a man of strong personality and opinion, of rugged strength, yet withal, of broad sympathy. One son, Dr. M. H. Fletcher, adopted his father's calling.

Dr. James Americus Reagan is the only survivor of the first effort at organized medicine in our county. He was born in Bradley county, Tennessee, in 1824, and moved to Weaverville, his present home, in 1851, being then a circuit rider in the Methodist Church. After graduating in medicine at Shelby in 1859 he added the practice of physic to this service of the church. For many years his regular work extended over a wider scope of territory than that of any one in the county, taking in parts of Madison and Yancey.

In 1867-68 Dr. Reagan was vice-president

of the first Buncombe County Medical Society. Later, when it was re-organized for a time, he was vice president again for one year and president for the two remaining years of its existence. In 1884 he was appointed on the State Board of Medical Examiners.

His marriage to Miss Mary Weaver made for him a large connection in the county, and his many years of devotion to the spiritual as well as bodily welfare of a large following have won a place for him that will never again be filled. Dr. Reagan has always been the deepest student and the most scholarly of our country physicians, his facile pen still at times enriching the medical annals of the State.

Another student of Dr. Hilliard's, George H. Thrash, was born in the Turkey Creek section in 1834. He attended lectures at the National Medical College in Washington and in 1859 entered upon his long career of country practice in the Hominy Valley, where he still lives and practices. He was a surgeon in the Militia during the war.

Before leaving the fifties mention should be made of Dr. J. L. Crumley, one of the first "birds of passage" in the profession, who came here about 1852, and moved on in two or three years. Dr. Foreman, another, came into the Hominy Valley from Transylvania, and during the war moved on to Haywood.

In 1860 Daniel F. Summey, a native of Lincoln County, who had studied under the elder Hardy, graduated in medicine at the University of the City of New York

and began work here.

He served through the war in the Quartermaster Department under Col. Stephen D. Lee, after which he practiced in Asheville until 1885. He then moved to Leicester where he now lives though not in active practice.

Another graduate of this period was Dr. Joseph McDowell, brother of the late Maj. W. W. McDowell of this city. For some time before the war he was in charge of the old Warm Springs Hotel. His war record was in the line where he rose to the rank of Colonel.

During the four years of war Dr. J. F. E. Hardy was the only physician who practiced uninterruptedly in Asheville, all of the others being in some way or at some time connected with the army. A complete war record of the county from a medical standpoint will not be attempted. In most cases the command in which engaged is all the information available as to these medical officers whose services are here chronicled. The only remaining names connected with the military service are those of Drs. R. W. Cooper and David M. Gudger.

Dr. Cooper was on the surgical staff of the 60th N. C., and practiced for many years in the Fairview section.

David M. Gudger was a private and corporal in "Zeb Vance's Company" in the 14th N. C. until wounded in "The Seven Day's Fight," furloughed and entered the Q. M. Department of the Western Army. His medical services date from 1868 when he graduated at the University of Philadel-

phia after studying with Dr. Holt. Dr. Gudger was born at the old Gudger place in the Lower Hominy Valley which continues to be his home, though he has given up general practice.

Dr. E. P. Holt, above mentioned, came to Asheville from Alamance county in 1865, and practiced a year or two with Dr. Summey. Dr. Boyd, of Mecklenburg, also practiced here in 1865.

About this time Dr. Daniel J. Cain, of Charleston, made Asheville his home. He was a man of the highest professional attainments, scholarly, possessed of a most pleasing personality and the courtly manners of the old school.

He was born in St. John's, Berkeley, South Carolina, in 1815, graduated at South Carolina College, and in medicine at Charleston, after which he spent two or three years studying in Paris. During his practice in Charleston he served on the staff of the Roper Hospital for eight years, and of the Marine Hospital for fifteen years. Soon after coming here he opened a sanitorium at Swannanoa Hill which he conducted for two years, treating among others some consumptives. His home for many years was on South Main Street just below Hilliard Lane, and it was here that he died in 1888.

In 1886 Dr. Cain received a fee of $6,000 for a visit to Europe, the largest single fee, so far as known, ever received by a physician in this county up to that time.

In 1855 Dr. Charles Tennent, father of the writer, built Edgehill, in more recent years the home of Maj. H. C. Hunt until

destroyed by fire a few years ago. This place he used as a summer home occasionally till 1868, in which year he moved to Asheville. He was born in Charleston in 1812, graduated at Amherst in 1834, and in medicine at Charleston in 1836. In 1870 he moved into the Lower Hominy Valley where he practiced in a local way till his death in 1881.

The first homeopath to make his home here was Dr. Charles Cliff. He came from Indianapolis in 1869, in which year he graduated at Hanneman, in Chicago, and settled at Swannanoa where he now lives. Of Dr. Gatchell, another homeopath who came about this time and of Dr. Gleitsmann we shall have occasion to speak further on.

Dr. I. A Harris, who had attended lectures at Philadelphia, and adjourned with other Southerners to Richmond on account of the war, moved into northern Buncombe about this time. He is still engaged in practice, being at present on the Pension Board.

Dr. Gabriel F. O'Brian, of Cincinnati, also a homeopath, came to Asheville in search of health in 1871. He only lived a few years after coming here, during which time he engaged in practice.

In 1874 Dr. H. B. Weaver settled in Weaverville after two years' practice in Mitchell county. He was born in Weaverville in 1851, studied under Dr. Reagan, and graduated in medicine from Washington University, Baltimore, in 1872. He is the only western man ever honored with the presidency of our State Medical Society.

His practice in Asheville dates from 1886.

A commentary on the practice of these times is contained in the following advertisement from an Asheville paper of 1871: "Dr. —— will attend all medical calls promptly. Prompt pay required in cash or produce." We do more scientific and hair splitting advertising nowadays.

Beginning with Dr. Weaver and up to 1884 most of those whose names appear in the annals of medicine are still with us, one exception being Dr. Percy Norcop, who was a sojourner here for a year or two about 1881. We will therefore obey the spirit of the old Greek maxim, "Call no man happy till he is dead," and only record the names and advent of the group of men collecting here in this period. The first of this number, Dr. R. I. Wilson, is still practicing in the Swannanoa section, where he was born and reared. Dr. William D. Hilliard graduated at Jefferson and took up work with his father in 1878 Dr. W. C. Brownson, of Connecticut, came in 1878; Dr. John Hey Williams, a native of Kentucky, in 1879; Dr. William J. Clontz, of Alexander, engaged in practice about 1880; Dr. James A. Burroughs, a Virginian, came in 1882; and Dr. A. M. Ballard, of Massachusetts, in 1884.

In this year, 1884, Dr. John Anderson Watson began his useful career in Asheville. He was born in York county, South Carolina, in 1849, graduated at South Carolina University and took up the study of medicine at the University of Maryland, where he graduated in 1872. After some years

spent in practice at Chester, S. C., he came to Asheville and soon made a name for himself in gynecology, being an unerring diagnostician and a skillful operator. He was president of our society in 189–, which by his death in 1902 lost one of its most loved and valued members.

In 1884 came also Dr. Wardlaw McGill, a native of Maryland, who, after graduating in Baltimore some years before, had been engaged in Eye, Ear and Throat work in his native town, Frederick. This work he took up here, and despite the feeble state of his health, his ability and his pleasing disposition won for him a good practice and many friends during his short stay. The climate had cured several of his immediate predecessors, but it was not infallible, and death claimed him in 1888.

Those whom curiosity or interest may incline to sift the wheat from the chaff of the threshing begun by the act of 1885 are respectfully referred to the records of the Court Clerk.

For what has come down to us concerning the first and second Buncombe County Medical Societies, the present one being the third, we are indebted to the memory of Dr. J. A. Reagan, wherein is chronicled the only remaining record of these two early efforts. In 1867 the first society was formed, meeting once a month, with Dr. J. F. E. Hardy, President, J. A. Reagan, Vice President, and J. G. Hardy, Secretary. This organization lasted two years with the same officers and a small membership. A year or two later it was reorgan-

ized with Dr. D. J. Cain as President, and Dr. J. A. Reagan Vice President. These officers were elected the next year and during the third and fourth years Dr. Reagan was President.

No further attempt was made at organization till 1885 when the present society had its birth. The original paper written on Jan. 12th, 1885, calling for a meeting on Jan. 26th, for the purpose of organizing the society, is now in the possession of Dr. J. A. Burroughs. It bears the following signatures: J. A. Burroughs, Wardlaw McGill, J. G. Hardy, D. J. Cain, M. L. Neilson, John Watson, W. W. Clark, W. D. Hilliard, John Hey Williams, W. C. Brownson and J. M. Stevens.

The importance of the county as a health resort is so great that a brief outline of this feature can only be attempted in this connection. If we are allowed the privilege of stepping a few miles beyond the present compass of the county, we will find that the region was known as a health resort some years before its settlement by the whites. To quote from Mr. Sondley's article: "The Warm Spring on the French Broad had been discovered in 1778 by Henry Reynolds and Thomas Morgan, two men kept out in advance of the settlements" (in Tennessee) "to watch the movements of the Indians. They had followed some stolen horses to the point opposite, and waded the river. On the southern shore, in passing through a little branch they were surprised to find the water warm. 'The next year,' says Ramsey, 'the Warm Springs were resorted to

by invalids.' ''

The first consumptive to visit Asheville, so far as we know, was Dr. Hardy, who came in 1821. He was cured, at least he lived here in good health for 61 years.

The first movement towards making a regular summer resort of Asheville for some reason failed. About 1827 Judge King, of Charleston, and Charles Baring, of the well known firm of Baring Brothers, then living in Charleston, came to Asheville to plant a little colony of summer refugees, driven annually by the heat and fevers from the south. Meeting with opposition, they bought the land now comprising the Flat Rock settlement.

The town, however, continued to be visited by invalids, many of whom were consumptives, off and on till 1870 when the publication of a pamphlet drew wider attention to it. This pamphlet, which was distributed at twenty cents per copy, bore the following title: (1) "Western North Carolina, its Agricultural resources, Mineral wealth, Climate, Salubriety and Scenery. By H. P. Gatchell, M. D., etc. Published by E. J. Aston. Esq., Asheville. Buncombe County, North Carolina." The author treats of the climatic advantages with a degree of moderation and accuracy that could have been copied to advantage by many succeeding writers. He states that in 1870 there were many people living in Asheville at an advanced age who had "come there as invalids early in life in the hope of being able to prolong a little their stay on earth." In this connection he quotes enthusiastic

words from the pen of Dr. S. H. Dickson. Here appears for the first time the table comparing Asheville's climate with that of Geneva, Turin, Milan and Vienne, which has been used in many pamphlets, most of which failed to state that it was based on only four years of observations at Asheville, and most of them confuse "Vienne," the French town, with Vienna.

The writer, who was a professor in Hanneman College, Chicago, for some years conducted at Forest Hill the first sanitorium for consumptives ever attempted here.

The following pamphlets were circulated after the above:

(2) "Life in North Carolina," a reprint from the London Daily News, Aug. 8th, 1874.

(3) "Western North Carolina," by Beale and Martin, Asheville, 1875.

(4) "Western North Carolina as a Health Resort," by Dr. J. W. Gleitsmann, reprinted from Philadelphia Med. and Surg. Reporter, Feb., 1876.

(5) "Biennial Report of the Mountain Sanitarium for Pulmonary Diseases, 1877."

(6) "The American Mountain Sanitarium at Asheville," by Stanford E. Chaille, New Orleans Med. and Surg. Journal, April, 1878.

(7) "The Land of the Sky, Nature's Trundle Bed of Recuperation," by "Guy Cyril," (Hinton R. Helper), about 1880.

Several of these to the number of 64,000 were circulated by Dr. J. W. Gleitsmann, who was the first recognized authority to write at length on this subject.

Dr. J. W. Gleitsmann was a German by birth, a graduate of the University of Wurzburg and a pioneer in his special line of work. He came here from Baltimore in 1875 after hunting through the Virginia mountains for a suitable location. On June 1st, 1875, he opened the Mountain Sanitarium for Pulmonary Diseases at the old Carolina House which stood opposite to the Sluder place in North Main Street. Here he treated on an average twenty to twenty-five patients daily for five years, practically all of them coming from a distance; in the winter from the north and in the summer from the south. Dr. Gleitsmann states that of all this number there were not more than a dozen lung patients from the town or immediate vicinity. During the sixth and last year of his stay he treated his patients at the Eagle Hotel.

He gives as his reason for throwing up the work and leaving Asheville, failure to obtain a suitable house wherein to carry on the work. It may be presumed that had the more enterprising citizens realized the immense results to accrue from Dr. Gleitsmann's advertising, the difficulty would have been overcome, and the Woodfin House which the doctor desired for a sanitarium would have been obtained for him. As it was Dr. Gleitsman probably did more than any other one man to bring this place into notoriety, for since his time the stream of travel has been continuous.

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